

Subject:
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY
2009-2018

Status: For Publication

Report to: CABINET

Date: 18th February 2009

Report of: Executive Director - Business

Portfolio

Holder: Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan / General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the revised Environmental Strategy following a period of consultation and to make recommendations for its future use and implementation.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
- Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green (Environment)
- Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (Economy)
- Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Environmental Strategy was approved in March 2007 and, following the publication of the Government's Energy Measures Report in September 2007, an Action Plan was developed and implemented in March 2008. Progress is being made in relation to the Actions, which primarily involved the various Departments and functions of Rossendale Borough Council.

- 4.2 During 2008 further consideration has been given to how the strategy can be embedded to ensure its sustainability. The Strategy was discussed at the Local Strategic Partnership Environment Theme Group meeting on 8th December 2008 and subsequently.
- 4.3 Responses received to this limited consultation made no significant change to the overall strategy with the basic aims of the strategy being confirmed. Several changes to details of text have been made.
- 4.4 In its Community Leadership role, Rossendale Borough Council can now involve the community and business more in the identification, design and delivery of future actions which will contribute towards achievement of the strategic aims. This would be in line with the new duty under section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) which comes into force on 1st April 2009.
- 4.5 This involvement can best be achieved by recommending that this Environmental Strategy be considered for adoption by the Local Strategic Partnership. This is in line with paragraph 2.6 of the statutory guidance "Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities" published in July 2008. It is also in line with Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000 which created a discretionary power for local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area. As such the power was designed to encourage innovation and closer joint working between local authorities and their partners to improve communities' quality of life.
- 4.6 Actions to implement this Environmental Strategy will contribute in many and various ways to the improvement of the local environment. This contributes directly to the achievement of the LSP Vision which is that "by 2018, Rossendale will have strong communities with an enhanced environment and heritage. It will be an attractive place to live where tourists visit and employers invest".
- 4.7 The potential format for development and implementation in future could be:-
- a) The Strategy be put forward to the LSP Board for adoption,
 - b) The Environment Theme Group be charged with the responsibility for developing, monitoring and managing implementation of the related Action Plan
 - c) Rossendale Borough Council will retain a direct responsibility for implementing actions but also develop a commissioning role in order to ensure it meets its best value duty. By linking with partners and the community, the Council will be able to:-
 - Seek opportunities for joint commissioning, thereby securing a more efficient use of resources
 - Focus on understanding what communities need, and
 - Avoid silos, and be creative in seeking opportunities to achieve more.
 - d) Opportunities for the achievement of Local Area Agreement targets will be enhanced.
 - e) By involving Neighbourhood Forums and businesses, we can ensure that all the community will have the opportunity to initiate and even help deliver contributions to the Action Plan for 2009-2010 and beyond.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

5.1 There are no financial implications in this report

6. MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 There are no legal implications with this report.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1 There are no Human Resource implications with this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The strategic aims of the Environmental Strategy have been reconsidered and remain valid. Future development of the Strategy and its related actions will be more effectively undertaken by involvement of communities and businesses. This will have the benefits, as stated in the statutory guidance to the Act, of:-

- Strengthening the democratic legitimacy of government and the civic life of the community
- More efficient and effective services that better reflect the needs of users and have higher levels of customer satisfaction
- Safer communities and a more attractive built environment that meets people's needs, and
- Strengthening community cohesion.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That the revised Environmental Strategy 2009-2018 be approved and forwarded to the board of the Local Strategic Partnership for adoption as an LSP document and as a means by which the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 will be implemented.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Consultation was undertaken with the members of the LSP Environment Theme Group in December 2008.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required	Yes
Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached	Yes

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required Yes

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached Yes

Contact Officer	
Name	Philip Mepham
Position	Environmental Health Manager
Service / Team	Environmental Health
Telephone	01706 252566
Email address	philipmepham@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rossendale Alive. Our Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities. Statutory Guidance. Department of Communities and local Government. July 2008.	Environmental Health Service Stubbylee Hall Stubbylee Lane Bacup Lancashire OL13 0DE

Rossendale Alive

Environment Strategy 2009 - 2018



Rossendalealive
THE ROSSENDALE PARTNERSHIP

Contents

- ❖ **Foreword** 3
- 1. Summary 4
- 2. Introduction 5
- 3. Rossendale 6
- 4. Visions and Aims of this Strategy 7
- 5. Nine Aims for this Action Plan 8
- 6. Aim One – Climate Change and Energy 8
- 7. Aim Two – Waste and Natural Resources 10
- 8. Aim Three – Public Realm 11
- 9. Aim Four – Sustainable Transport 12
- 10. Aim Five – Air and Noise Pollution 13
- 11. Aim Six – Sustainable Water Environment 14
- 12. Aim Seven – Sustainable use of Land 15
- 13. Aim Eight – Natural Environment and Biodiversity 16
- 14. Aim Nine – Awareness and Education 18
- 15. Implementation, Monitoring and Review 19

Version Control

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Author</i>
1.0	1 st November 2008	A Joyce, Technical Officer
2.0	19 th January 2009	A Joyce, Technical Officer
2.1	27 th January 2009	P Mepham, Environmental Health Manager

Foreword

The Environmental Strategy provides an overall framework for safeguarding and improving the environment over the next 10 years. This document is therefore linked to a number of other strategies and Action Plans that relate to different aspects of the environment. A set of separate Action Plans have been developed to demonstrate how each of the Aims of this Strategy are being implemented and which act as signposts to the various other initiatives.

The Action Plans will be revised annually and this overall Strategy reviewed annually to keep it up to date. The following paragraphs show how the Strategies and Action Plans link together:-

Aim One – Climate Change and Energy – this implements our contribution to the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Our Energy Efficiency promotions will be included within the scope of this Aim.

Aim Two – Waste and Natural Resources – refers to the Council's Waste Management Strategy and Recycling Plans

Aim Three – Public Realm – includes strategies and actions connected with dog fouling, litter, graffiti, open spaces, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles and general environmental cleanliness.

Aim Four – Sustainable Transport – links to activities connected with reducing the need to travel, promoting environmentally friendly modes of transport and mitigating the effects of unavoidable transport.

Aim Five – Air and Noise Pollution – links to the noise Strategy and Air Quality Strategy

Aim Six – Sustainable Water Strategy – links to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Water and Drainage Strategy (due during 2009)

Aim Seven – Sustainable use of land – relates to the Contaminated Land Strategy and regeneration plans as well as the Geodiversity Action Plan which itself is linked to the Lancashire Geodiversity Action Plan.

Aim Eight – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity – links to the Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans, which themselves are linked to the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Aim Nine – Awareness and Education – includes actions aimed at promoting the strategy and its various components.

1. Summary

Rossendale's local environment not only impacts on the people of today and tomorrow but also contributes to the environment experienced by the wider world.

Any actions and decisions made by agencies, organisations and individuals have an impact on the environment and will continue to have an impact for many years to come. The environment is very important to Rossendale because of its effect on feelings of wellbeing in addition to health and the economy.

Rossendale Borough Council and its partners, recognises the importance of this issue and have expressed a Vision for the Future, which includes the state of the environment.

This strategy identifies a number of aspects of the environment where action today will safeguard and improve the environment, not only for today but also for tomorrow. Aspects of the environment have been identified as a framework of aims. This strategy will be implemented through a series of action plans relating to each of the aims, which are;

1. Climate Change and Energy
2. Waste and Natural Resources
3. Public Realm
4. Sustainable Transport
5. Air and Noise Pollution
6. Sustainable Water Environment
7. Sustainable use of Land
8. Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity
9. Awareness and Education

Each of these 9 aims will be achieved through the co-ordination of agencies, organisations and individuals both by the implementation of related Actions Plans and through the separate efforts of individuals, businesses and the whole community.

This strategy will be regularly monitored against a benchmark and progress recorded and reported. It will also be regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to be valid and reflect continually changing realities.

2. Introduction

The local environment impacts not only on the health of the people of today's and tomorrow's Rossendale but also contributes to the environment experienced by the wider world. This brings to life the phrase 'Act locally, think globally'.

2.1 Nationally

On a national scale, this strategy links to the UK's Government strategy "Securing the Future, Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy". That strategy has the aim of enabling all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. The Climate Change Act 2008 contains many commitments and targets of relevance.

2.2 Sub-Regionally

On a sub-regional scale, the Lancashire Partnership's Strategic vision is described in "Ambition Lancashire 2005-2025", with its aim of achieving a greener Lancashire. The vision for 2025 is "where Lancashire is a County where the dramatic beauty of our landscape and wildlife is cherished, and our urban areas contain fine buildings and inviting open spaces". Lancashire plays its part in addressing global environmental issues and delivering environmental sustainability. This Environmental Strategy represents Rossendale's contribution to achieving the Lancashire Vision. The Lancashire Environment Partnership also published its Environment Strategy 2005-2010 in November 2004.

2.3 Local

On a local scale, Rossendale Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy for 2008-2018 sets out a vision for the future and focuses on the priorities of people, places and prosperity. This Environmental Strategy impacts on all these priorities. Although primarily affecting the priority of place, by protecting and improving the environment, the health, welfare and prosperity of residents, businesses and visitors is also enhanced.

The choices made today, and the behaviour resulting from those choices, impact on the environment and the environment impacts on everyone. By focusing on measures and choices we can enable the Government's aims to be delivered locally. By acting with National, Regional and Local agencies, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, communities and families, we can achieve the overall vision described in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The purpose of this document is to propose issues relating to the Environment and the action that could be taken by Rossendale Borough Council and its partners to protect and improve the environment. Through the development of this strategy, activities can be co-ordinated, best practice encouraged and the maximum benefit achieved by working in partnership.

In order to demonstrate its commitment to encouraging and delivering continuous improvement in environmental performance, the Council has approved an Environmental Policy Statement.

3. Rossendale

Rossendale is one of the smallest Lancashire districts, with a slowly rising population of 66,700. It covers 138 sq km adjoining the conurbations of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, a band of urban development runs East-West along the deeply incised upper valley of the River Irwell, flanked by harsh Pennine moorland scattered with isolated settlements.

Centuries of sheep farming on the enclosed moorland gave way in the industrial revolution to textile mills, which in turn have been converted to footwear manufacture or other uses. A string of former mill towns including, Bacup, Rawtenstall and Haslingden, runs East-West along the narrow valley floor, the western end connected to the motorway system via the M66.

Eighty Eight percent of the Borough is green space and a quarter of this is designated green belt land. It is an area of high landscape and recreational value. The Borough offers excellent opportunities for active leisure.

Rossendale's built environment is characterised by the remains of its industrial heritage, there are over 260 listed buildings and 9 conservation areas. Stone built terraced housing constructed before 1919 forms a third of the housing in the Borough; it is visually harmonious, but almost a quarter of these houses are in poor condition and low-income or elderly residents occupy many. A stock condition survey is currently being undertaken. Approximately 420 sites within Rossendale are potentially contaminated as a result of previous or current use.

On the index of multiple deprivation, Rossendale ranks 92nd among English Councils, aspects of deprivation such as crime and employment show few extremes, but there is a high degree of health deprivation in the Borough, 20% of super output areas (SOAs) are among the worst 10% in the country.

The environment in which we live is a significant determinant of health. All the factors that lead to health inequalities are imperfectly understood. However local action on economic, social and environmental inequalities can make a difference (IDeA, Using the power of wellbeing to improve health, 2006). Men can expect to live for 74.6 years in Rossendale and women 79.5 years, both about 1.5 years less than regional or national averages. Within Rossendale there is a gap in life expectancy of 3.5 years between the poorest and the most affluent areas.

Manufacturing still employs a quarter of the Borough's workforce. Unemployment within Rossendale is low, and the economic activity rate, at 80% is well above the regional and national averages. However, wage rates within the Borough are low. There is a marked difference between the median weekly wage of those who work in the Borough and those who commute out of the Borough, mainly to Greater Manchester This gap is the largest in Lancashire, and together with health and

housing statistics points to a more general diversity among social and economic groups in the Borough.

Many people live in Rossendale due to its environment. Public surveys repeatedly highlight the natural environment as the most important factor in the quality of life in the Borough. The Rossendale Strategic Partnership, conscious of the value of this most vulnerable asset, aims to maintain and enhance it for local people.

The Borough has numerous environmental attributes, including several Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Council's local plan states that the Council wishes to perpetuate the distinctive character of Rossendale's society and culture, to conserve the attractive physical environment, to improve those features that need enhancement and to remedy, in conjunction with other agencies, the unattractive aspects of dereliction, obsolescence, pollution, contamination and conflicting land use. Many aspects of this work are identified as policies in the Local Plan.

One important feature is the special nature of the Borough's moorland areas. Another is the River Irwell which was the focus for industrial development, providing first water power then steam power. Despite years of pollution, many new industries are now working with environmental organisations to improve the quality of the river, which can now support Brown Trout and diverse aquatic invertebrates. The River Irwell throughout Rossendale is currently rated R1 (water of very good quality) by the Environment Agency.

4. Visions and Aims of this Strategy

The Rossendale Strategic Partnership has expressed its Vision in relation to places as follows;

"By 2018, Rossendale will have strong communities with an enhanced environment and heritage. It will be an attractive place to live where tourists visit and employ invest".

Aims

The aims are set out within the following sections. Greater information will be displayed in the action plans. Each section contains background information on the subject, the health impact of that subject, sets objectives for the future and includes related National Indicators. Inevitably, this strategy will overlap with others and links to those existing or proposed will need to be identified.

Action plans to implement the activities will be developed annually and integrated into the plans of participating partners.

An annual review of progress will be published in order to inform participants of the progress made and to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant and up to date.

The following sections identify nine themes, followed by a cross-cutting theme of awareness and education and the proposed means by which the strategy will be implemented, monitored, reported and reviewed.

5. Nine Aims for Action Plans

The nine aims are;

1. Climate Change and Energy
2. Waste and Natural Resources
3. Public Realm
4. Sustainable Transport
5. Air and Noise Pollution
6. Sustainable Water Environment
7. Sustainable use of Land
8. Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity
9. Awareness and Education

6. Aim One - Climate Change and Energy

Overall Aim – To limit climate change by controlling greenhouse gas emissions

Background

Climate Change is the most serious environmental problems facing the world. Climate Change is almost certainly caused by a build up of man made emissions of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, including Carbon Dioxide and Methane (CO₂, CH₄). These gases are released through the combustion of fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, oil) for energy generation and transport purposes, but also during the landfill disposal of biodegradable waste and from the use/disposal of products containing greenhouse gases.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, Feb 2007) reported that evidence and understanding of the warming and cooling influences on the climate leads them to consider, with a 90% certainty, that the increase in global warming are due to human activities.



We depend heavily on the use of energy in our every day lives for the heating and power supply to our homes and workplaces, for transport and for commercial and industrial uses. The majority of our energy is generated from non-renewable resources such as coal, oil and gas, the supplies of which are not without limits. The burning of these fuels releases pollutants such as Sulphur Dioxide, Nitrogen Oxides and small particles into the atmosphere affecting the local air quality. Perhaps a more serious problem is the release of Carbon Dioxide, one of the two main greenhouse gases. We need to conserve precious resources by using energy wisely and look instead to the use of renewable technologies including biomass, wind, small-scale micro generation, wave and solar energy along with other green technologies.

Rossendale Borough Council can act in three main ways to help reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and thereby help the community adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Council can act as:

- a) Community Leader – Through the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership, Rossendale Borough Council can work with other public and private agencies and the Rossendale Climate Change Group and others to help cut the overall emissions of their area and develop an integrated response to Climate Change adaptation.
- b) Service Provider – For all the services that the Council provides or commissions, it can ensure that the impacts of Climate Change are properly taken into account and emissions are cut as far as possible, for example, Building Regulation enforcement will act to improve the energy efficiency of new and altered buildings
- c) Estate Manager – The Council is an employer and consumer of energy and other resources. Through better management of transport and buildings, the Council can cut emissions and save money.

The Council has a duty, under section 3(2) of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006, “in exercising any of their functions, to have regard to the most recently published energy measures report (if any)”. This would include action on:

- a) Improving efficiency in the use of electricity, heat, gas, fuel and other description or sources of energy
- b) Increasing the amount of electricity generated, or heat produced, by micro generation or otherwise by plant which relies wholly or mainly on low-emission sources or technology
- c) Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases
- d) Reducing the number of households in which one or more persons are living in fuel poverty by improving thermal efficiency.

6.1 Health Effects

The Department of Health and the Health Protection Agency published a report in 2007 entitled “Health Effects of Climate Change in the UK: An Update of the Department of Health Report 2001/2002”. From this and other sources, climate change can be expected to cause the following impacts on UK health;

An increase in deaths, disability and injury from:

- Extremes of heat and cold
- Floods and storms, including health hazards from chemical and sewage pollution
- Food poisoning
- Respiratory problems from the damaging effects of surface ozone during summer and mould growth in housing
- Skin cancer and cataracts
- Insect-borne disease from increases in flies and fleas

There may also be health gains, deliverable through:

- Reduce winter deaths from the effects of cold
- Improved health and prosperity through more frequent access to the outdoor environment for recreation and agriculture
- Improved opportunities for economic activity related to environmental issues

6.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are;

- To contribute to the implementation of the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- To reduce Methane emissions from waste disposal
- To reduce Carbon Dioxide and small particle emissions from transport use and to reduce Carbon Dioxide emission levels generally
- To minimise energy use and Carbon Dioxide emissions originating from the use of energy
- To improve the energy efficiency of homes as a means of reducing fuel poverty
- To increase the production and proportion of energy consumed from renewable sources
- To understand, and where possible, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change

6.3 National Indicators

- NI 185 – CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
- NI 186 – Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area (LAA Target)
- NI 187 – Tackling fuel poverty, % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating. (LAA Target)
- NI 188 – Planning to adapt to Climate Change (LAA Target)

7. Aim Two - Waste and Natural Resources

Overall Aim – To minimise waste and the consumption of natural resources

Background

Household waste that is not recycled or composted is currently disposed of in landfill sites outside the Borough boundary thereby adding the environmental effects of transportation. Although landfill disposal will probably always be required to some extent, it has the potential to cause pollution and releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The most important way of tackling this issue is to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the first place.

Using the waste minimisation hierarchy, the following action in order of priority, can both be undertaken by the Council and encouraged amongst others, including the private and voluntary sectors:

- Eliminate – By eliminating waste, none needs to be disposed of
- Reduce – Similarly, by reducing the production the production of waste, there is less to dispose
- Reuse – Reusing waste that would otherwise be disposed of as waste means that you are getting better value for money as you are making valuable materials last longer. Another benefit is that new materials do not need to be purchased, thereby saving more money.
- Recycle – At this stage some of the materials that have been produced and used could be capable of being used again. Recycling is better than final disposal as this prevents the use of additional natural resources together with

potential savings in energy and water for processing and in the use of landfill resources.

- Dispose – The least favourable option. In Rossendale this generally means burying in landfill and space for landfill is increasingly rare and prices are getting more expensive all the time.

7.1 Health Effects

There are several possible health effects of waste management operations, including the consequences of noise, odour, dust, visual intrusion, damage to plant and animals, damage to soils, pollution of water, pollution of air, emissions of greenhouse gases and damage to buildings from acidic gas. Of these the scientific evidence indicates that probably most important on a national scale are emissions of methane from landfill sites as this is a significant contributor to global warming.

7.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To reduce waste production at the source
- To increase the reuse, recycling and composting of waste
- To reduce greenhouse emissions formed during the disposal of waste
- To support and promote the market for, and procurement of, recycled products and materials.

7.3 National Indicators

- NI 191 – Residual household waste per household
- NI 192 – Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (LAA Target)
- NI 193 – Percentage of municipal waste land filled

8. Aim Three – Public Realm

Overall Aim – To improve the cleanliness of Rossendale’s environment

Background

The public realm impacts on the whole community and is consistently rated as the most important issue for local people. A clean, green and safe neighbourhood will win support for and confidence in the Council. The Pride in Rossendale initiative contributes significantly to this Aim.

Cleaner, greener environments can support and achieve objectives on health, employment, transport, education etc. e.g. if parks are cleaner, greener and safer, more children will use them, increasing their social networks, their ability and inclination to learn, and become fitter. A cleaner well-used area creates a perception that it is cared for and safe and helps discourage anti-social behaviour and serious crime.

Cleaner, greener environments also encourage investments and economic development, support regeneration and help areas to thrive, providing more local

jobs and facilities. The Council has a key role in ensuring a cleaner and greener environment and performance in this respect has a significant impact on the public perception of the Council in general. The Council's Open Space, Play and Parks development Strategies include specific initiatives and proposals in relation to this issue.

8.1 Health Effects

A high quality environment can improve health. Natural surroundings reduce stress and encourage people to take up outdoor activities such as walking, cycling or water sports, which help keep us fit and healthy. By improving local environments, we give people close to home where they can relax or exercise.

Physically active people are known to have a lower risk of dying from coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, and hypertension and colon cancer. There is now much evidence that links the natural environment with good physical health and physiological well-being. Today, stress and mental ill with these conditions are growing. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that depression and depression-related illness will become the greatest source of ill health by 2020.

8.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To reduce litter and dog fouling on the streets and in public spaces, including parks, green spaces, rivers and other water features
- To reduce the incidence of fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
- To improve the visual appearance of the street scene and make it more resident-friendly

8.3 National Indicators

- NI 195 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting) (LAA Target)
- NI 196 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness, fly tipping

9. Aim Four - Sustainable Transport

Overall Aim: To encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport

Background

Our quality of life depends on transport for easy access to work, school, shopping, leisure and the community facilities. However, the way we travel and continued increase in road traffic is degrading local air quality, causing congestion and contributing to Climate Change and the depletion of non-renewable resources.

We therefore need to look at how we travel and examine how we can reduce the impact of these journeys. This means trying to become less reliant on the car and seeking more sustainable alternatives. Looking at when we travel and why we travel is important, as is using public policy to ensure that new developments are located appropriately and make it easier to use sustainable means of transport.

9.1 Health Effects

Transport policies have important health consequences through their effects on air pollution, noise, injuries, climate change and their ability to create (or not) safe conditions for walking and cycling. These health consequences affect most of the population, not just transport users.

Estimates of the health impacts and costs of transport strategies do not include the health effects of increased walking and cycling and the savings associated with increased walking and cycling for a population. The burden of transport on health is higher than expected, partly because users do not pay the full costs of the transport activities in which they engage.

9.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for future are:

1. To reduce the need to travel
2. To reduce the need to travel other than environmentally friendly means
3. to increase the proportion of journeys made by sustainable modes of transport, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing in preference to single occupancy car use
4. To reduce the levels of congestions in the valley
5. To minimise the environment impact of traffic, including air pollution and noise

9.3 National Indicators

- NI 167 – Congestion – Average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- NI 175 – Access to services/facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- NI 176 – Working age people with access to employment by public transport
- NI 177 – Local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the authority area
- NI 178 – Bus services running on time
- NI 198 – Children travelling to school, mode of transport usually used.

10. Aim Five - Air and Noise Pollution

Overall Aim: To minimise air and noise pollution in Rossendale

Background

Air pollution is detrimental to human health, can damage buildings and building materials and has significantly effects on wildlife, soils and water. While the air quality in Rossendale is generally good, pollution levels are increasing in some areas due to increased traffic levels. Emissions from commercial premises and bonfires also contribute to pollution levels. Motor vehicles emit a range of pollutants including nitrogen dioxide, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and small particles, which are particularly hazardous to health. In addition, the combustion of fuels for transport, heating and power purposes produce Carbon Dioxide, which is one of the main gases linked to Climate Change.

Noise from industry, transport and neighbouring households can affect people's quality of life by causing annoyance, disturbing sleep and in extreme conditions, causing physical damage to health.

10.1 Health Effects

For most people, pollution levels in Rossendale are unlikely to cause any serious health effect. During particularly severe pollution episodes, eye irritation or coughing may be triggered. Certain sensitive individuals, who are more susceptible to respiratory pollution, may feel the effects more acutely or at lower levels. These individuals include those who suffer from heart and lung disease, including asthma and bronchitis, especially young children and the elderly. The Government's Air Quality Bands describe the health impact of varying levels of pollution on these sensitive individuals.

The health effects of exposure to noise are an increasingly significant public health issue. Noise is a serious issue and one of the most common environmental problems and also the leading disturbing factor in homes and offices. In certain workplaces and during certain leisure activities, such as going to discos or listening to walkmans, excessive noise can severely damage hearing. Effects of today's ongoing noise pollution include:

- a) Irritability, behavioural deviation, stress-related psychological problems, communication difficulties, relaxation and sleep disorders
- b) Adverse impact on future generations (deteriorated residential, social and learning environments, impaired human development)
- c) Socio-cultural, aesthetical and economic problems (social isolation, run-down neighbourhoods, reduced value of buildings)

10.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To maintain and improve air quality in the valley
- To minimise the effects of noise on quality of life

10.3 National Indicators

- NI 194 – Air quality, % reduction in NO_x and Primary PM₁₀ emissions through local authorities estate and operations

11. Aim Six - Sustainable Water Environment

Overall Aim: To encourage the sustainable management of the water environment

Background

Water is a valuable resource and an essential requirement for life. We depend on it in our homes and gardens and for industrial and agricultural purposes. Although it is a renewable resource, moving around the hydrological cycle, our increasing demands for water and the release of pollutants into watercourses have a direct impact on the natural environment. A lot of energy is used to purify rainwater and treat sewage so saving water helps to reduce energy use and therefore mitigate climate change.

The controlled or accidental discharge of effluents can, however, cause pollution of watercourses that may lead to a reduction in water quality and loss of aquatic species. Also the natural ecosystem relies on surface water so that any water excluded from the environment has an impact on the ecosystem.

The latest forecasts suggest that summers will be drier, whilst winters will be wetter with increasing occurrences of flash floods, heightened by increased surface run-off caused by extension of the built environment. Examples of extreme weather include the 2003 Summer heat wave, which resulted in an excess level of deaths amongst 32,000 people across Europe, as well as the floods in Southern England and Yorkshire in 2007.

To ensure the long-term future of the water environment it is therefore important that we use water wisely and safeguard it from pollution. We also need to protect communities against flooding incidents by regular maintenance of flood defence schemes, the avoidance of building on flood plains and the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage systems into new developments to control surface water runoff.

11.1 Health Effects

The quality and sufficiency of water is critical for the maintenance of human life and also for the wider ecosystem. However, excess water in the form of flooding can cause harm to health by conveying pollution and damaging the infrastructure.

11.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To encourage the sustainable use of water in the valley
- To protect and improve water quality in the rivers and watercourses
- To effectively manage flood risks in the valley
- To ensure the effective operation of foul and surface water drainage systems including the effective and efficient drainage of land
- To ensure the protection and improvement of public and private water supplies

11.3 National Indicators

- NI 189 – Flood and coastal erosion risk management

12. Aim Seven - Sustainable use of Land

Overall Aim: To encourage the sustainable use of land within Rossendale

Background

Land is a finite resource. The pressures on the use of land for homes, jobs, shopping, leisure, food production, transport and building materials can lead to the loss of what is most valued in the environment. We therefore need to balance the protection of our environment whilst allowing sustainable forms of development that will bring about economic growth, employment and social progress. This includes concentrating development on previously developed or 'Brownfield' land, where possible, in order to protect the green spaces.

Land can become contaminated by virtue of past or current use or even by the use of an adjacent site e.g. migration of gases from landfill sites. Rossendale has a history of industrial activity over centuries that have left some potentially contaminated sites in the Borough. However, few sites are so contaminated that they cannot be re-used for either employment or housing purposes. Contaminated land within the borough needs to be identified and cleaned up where there is a risk to human health or to the environment.

Soil is important for a number of reasons:

- a) Food production is essential for human survival, almost all vegetation including grassland, arable crops and trees need soil for the supply of water and nutrients and to fix their roots
- b) Soil stores and partly transforms minerals, organic matter, chemicals and energy, it also acts as a natural filter for organisms
- c) Soil is the platform for human activity. It is part of the landscape and cultural heritage and acts as the foundation for developments.

12.1 Health Effects

There are no mandatory standards defining concentrations of contaminants in soil above which there may be an unacceptable risk to human health. Contaminant toxicology and the extent of exposure to contaminants which is linked to human behaviour at a site, form an essential part of the risk assessment process in relation to contaminated land

12.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To balance the need to stimulate the growth and regeneration of the Borough with the need to protect the quality of the environment.
- To protect Rossendale's surrounding moorland, parks and green space
- To make full and effective use of land and buildings within the urban area through bringing the under-used derelict sites and structures back into use where practicable
- To implement a proactive contaminated land strategy in order to reduce the extent of contaminated land
- To minimise the environment impact of the construction of new developments

12.3 National Indicators

- LI 216b – Contaminated land

13. Aim Eight - Natural environment, biodiversity and geodiversity

Overall Aim: To protect, conserve and enhance Rossendale's countryside, green spaces and biodiversity

Background

Rossendale's countryside runs alongside and around the urban areas. The moorland to the North and South of the central valley provide an important landscape backdrop and wildlife resource. Together they provide opportunities for recreation, wildlife biodiversity and landscape enjoyment.

Rossendale's natural green spaces and associated wildlife make a major contribution to the quality of life for those who live and work in Rossendale. They also contribute towards Rossendale's image as a green Borough and serve to make it an attractive place to which companies and people can relocate.

The green environmental infrastructure is important for several reasons:

- a) Trees ensure that we can breathe by taking CO₂ out of our air,
- b) Encourages physical activity and therefore improves health
- c) Encourages relaxation and a sense of well being and leads to a decrease in graffiti and vandalism
- d) Can encourage social interaction between children and different communities
- e) Protects and enhances wildlife and natural habitats, which is important for its own sake.

13.1 Health Effects

The health benefits of nature are physical social, and psychological. The evidence base shows three broad levels of engagement with nature that can have beneficial health effects, those being "a room with a view", the presence of nearby nature and active participation with nature.

The value of green space and nature in terms of health benefit is reflected in the Government's Biodiversity Strategy (Defra 2004). It accepts that objective research supports what many people intuitively feel - that nature is good for us. The strategy notes that projects aimed at encouraging people to take up walking in natural environments, or to undertake active countryside management have resulted in far higher levels of public participation. The attractiveness of the environment acts as an additional motivator and research shows that mere visual contact with nature reduces stress and promotes well-being. Delivery of biodiversity objectives will not only enhance the quality of the environment, but also provide the underlying foundations for health improvement initiatives, so long as people have access to biodiversity.

13.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To protect and enhance Rossendale's biodiversity and green infrastructure including SSSIs
- To encourage informal recreation and enjoyment of Rossendale's green spaces
- To raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Rossendale's green spaces and wildlife
- To work with the Lancashire RIGS group to help implement the Lancashire Local Geodiversity Action Plan in Rossendale

13.3 National Indicators

- NI 170 – Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 yrs
- NI 197 – Improved local biodiversity, proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented (LAA Target)

14. Aim Nine - Awareness and Education

Overall Aim: To increase awareness of environmental and sustainability issues within Rossendale

Background

At any one time we are faced by a variety of global and local environmental issues, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, acid rain, litter, air pollution, increased waste production and traffic congestion. These problems are, however, generally the result of the accumulation of local impacts. Local action must be taken to protect the environment in order to maintain and improve the quality of life of both present and future generations.

Legislation plays a large part in controlling the environmental impact of businesses, organisations and the public. The scientific evidence that climate change is a serious and urgent issue is now compelling. Strong action is justified to reduce greenhouse gases around the world to reduce the risk of very damaging and potentially irreversible impacts on ecosystems, societies and economies. With good policies the costs of action need not be prohibitive and would be much smaller than the damage averted (Stern Report, 2006)

Technology can also offer a number of benefits, such as harnessing of renewable sources of energy (wind, hydro, solar) the development of cleaner vehicle technologies and the discovery of new uses for waste materials.

However, the power that individuals have to influence change, through the actions and decisions taken every day, can have a large impact on the environment. Greater understanding of environmental issues by everyone is therefore vital importance in helping to make choices which protect and improve both local and global environments. Changes in land use would have a range of influences on the environment and these would need to be understood.

This is not just presenting facts and figures but making linkages with people so that they change their attitudes and, thereby, their behaviour. To achieve this we would need to:

- a) Produce clear and consistent information
- b) Create a sense of impact
- c) Confirm the local impact
- d) Make environment issues “cool” and become the norm
- e) Target specific groups with specific message which are tailored to them
- f) Recognise that this requires long-term commitment as this is not a short term process
- g) Recognise the economic impact of environmental actions or inactions

- h) Understand the feasibility of proposed initiative e.g. carbon sinks, for Rossendale

14.1 Health Effects

The encouragement of personal responsibility is a fundamental requirement so that people, businesses and the community will need access to useful, timely and accurate information upon which personal choices can be made.

14.2 Objectives for the future

Objectives for the future are:

- To increase public awareness of the environment and sustainable development
- To encourage environmentally responsible business practice
- To become a source of information about the links between pollution and wildlife

15. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This strategy will be implemented through its adoption by the various partners and individuals involved. Progress made in implementing the strategy and action plans will be monitored through the Council's Performance Management Framework, through implementation of the Council's Procurement Policy, through the Rossendale Local Strategic Partnership Environment Theme Group and through liaison with partners. A set of indicators will be developed to enable absolute changes within Rossendale to be monitored over time. This will enable progress to be identified and also situations where further action may be needed in the future.

The indicators of relevance to the environment can be used to:

- Paint a picture of the environment locally
- Facilitate a comparisons of performance between different areas
- Stimulate debate and raise public awareness
- Inform local strategies and local area agreements
- Review, justify and set local objectives and priorities
- Monitor change and assess and evaluate progress over time, and
- Enhance partnership working, shared action and joint working.

Reference is also made to the performance of business as they have a marked impact on the natural environment. The Council has the ability to influence the environmental impact of business and the Government expects businesses to report on their significant environmental impacts whether they are direct or indirect. Both the Council and organisations with which they interact have an effect in three ways:

1. Supply chain impacts – their use of resources, e.g. energy, water, raw materials
2. Direct organisations impacts – boiler or plant emissions, transport emissions, waste, recycling rate
3. Downstream impacts – products in use, product disposal